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A new cave species of *Isometrus* Ehrenberg 1828 from Myanmar (Scorpiones: Buthidae)

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Scorpion;
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Isometrus;
Reddyanus;
alessandroi ;
taxonomy;
new species;
description;
cave;
rainforest;
Myanmar.

Abstract. – A new species belonging to the genus *Isometrus* Ehrenberg 1828, subgenus *Reddyanus* Vachon, 1972, is described from Myanmar: *Isometrus* (*Reddyanus*) *alessandroi* **sp**. **n**., which was collected in Saddan Cave, located in Kayin State, in the East of the country. In recent years the number of new species added to both subgenera *Isometrus* and *Reddyanus* have increased remarkably. Nevertheless, none of these descriptions concerned Myanmar. This particular geographic situation as well as a combination of several morphological features led us to propose here this new species.

Lourenço W. R. & Ythier E., 2025. – A new cave species of *Isometrus* Ehrenberg 1828 from Myanmar (Scorpiones: Buthidae). *Faunitaxys*, 13(04): 1 – 6.

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Introduction

In several previous publications, the taxonomic position of the buthid subgenera *Isometrus* and *Reddyanus* was largely discussed (Lourenço *et al*., 2005; Lourenço & Zhu, 2008b; Lourenço & Duhem, 2010; Lourenço & Leguin, 2012). Even in a more recent publication this question was again the subject of polemics (Lourenço, 2023). The genus *Isometrus* originally described by Ehrenberg (in Hemprich & Ehrenberg) (1828) with *Buthus* (*Isometrus*) *filum* Ehrenberg, 1828 [= *Isometrus maculatus* (DeGeer, 1778)], as type species by monotypy, was divided in two subgenera, *Isometrus* and *Reddyanus* by Vachon (1972). This division was mainly supported by the relative position of a number of trichobothria (refer to Vachon, 1972; Lourenço & Leguin 2012). More recently Kovařík *et al*. (2016) decided to raise the subgenus *Reddyanus* to the rank of genus. As already stated by Lourenço (2023) this decision appears to be based on a number of artificial arguments. This same group of authors have recently multiplied these decisions with the creation of other artificial genera, or in other cases the fusion of several subgenera and genera into single taxonomic units, which attests the subjectivity of their decisions (Kovařík *et al*., 2016; 2020a). In a very recent paper, Tang (2025) insisted on the decision taken by these authors to totally separate the genera *Isometrus* and *Reddyanus*. The previous arguments defined by Vachon (1972) seem to clearly justify only a minor separation of these two groups of species. Consequently, we prefer to maintain the status quo instead of accepting a possible artificial generic definition, and so we maintain here the subgeneric status of both *Isometrus* and *Reddyanus*. The number of new species in both subgenera knew a remarkable increase in recent years and not all these taxonomic decisions have been confirmed yet (see Kovařík *et al*. 2020b; Bandgar *et al*., 2024). Finally, in the same paper by Tang (2025), several taxonomic decisions, in particular those placing a well defined species (*Isometrus* (*R*.) *tibetanus* Lourenço & Zhu, 2008) in synonymy with *Isometrus* (*R*.) *assamensis* (Oates, 1888) or simply considering another one (*Isometrus* (*R*.) *kanak* Lourenço, 2023) as nomen dubium, sounds once more arbitrary, especially in the total absence of any further analysis of the type material concerning these taxa, such decisions being only based on suppositions and unreliable iNaturalist photos. For this reason, once again we reject those taxonomic decisions by Tang (2025). This author seems to be under influence of other scorpion taxonomists who simply reject most taxonomic decisions taken by our study group.

The new species of *Isometrus* (*Reddyanus*) described here is the second to be found inside a cave (after *I*. (*R*.) *deharvengi*) and the first reported from Myanmar (Lourenço & Duhem, 2010). Our decision of describing the new species, *I*. (*R*.) *alessandroi* **sp**. **n**. based on an immature (pre-adult) specimen comes from the fact that the collection of specimens in caves is extremely aleatory (specimens are rare). Moreover, the characters used to define the new species show very poor or even no variability between adults and juveniles. If subsequently adults may be collected in the same cave, a complement of information will be possible.

Reviewer : Gérard Dupré (*France*).

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Material and methods

Illustrations and measurements were produced using a Wild M5 stereomicroscope with a drawing tube (camera lucida) and an ocular micrometer. Habitus photographs were made with a Canon EOS RP and Adobe Photoshop software. Measurements follow Stahnke (1970) and are given in mm. Trichobothrial notations are those of Vachon (1974, 1975) while cheliceral nomenclature follows Vachon (1963) and morphological terminology is according to Hjelle (1990).

Taxonomic treatment

Family **Buthidae** C. L. Koch, 1837

Genus ***Isometrus*** Ehrenberg, 1828

Subgenus ***Reddyanus*** Vachon, 1972

Composition of the subgenus *Reddyanus* in Southeast Asia (in order of description)

- *I.* (*R.*) *zideki* Kovařík, 1994 (Malaysia, Indonesia)
- *I.* (*R.*) *kurkai* Kovařík, 1997 (Indonesia, Malaysia)
- *I.* (*R.*) *krasenskyi* Kovařík, 1998 (Indonesia)
- *I.* (*R.*) *navaiae* Kovařík, 1998 (Philippines)
- *I.* (*R.*) *petrzelkai* Kovařík, 2003 (Vietnam)
- *I.* (*R.*) *deharvengi* Lourenço & Duhem, 2010 (Vietnam)
- *I.* (*R.*) *feti* Kovařík, 2013 (Indonesia)
- *I.* (*R.*) *jendeki* Kovařík, 2013 (Malaysia)
- *I.* (*R.*) *neradi* Kovařík, 2013 (Thailand)
- *I.* (*R.*) *furai* Kovařík & Šťáhlavský, 2019 (Vietnam)
- *I.* (*R.*) *hofereki* Kovařík & Šťáhlavský, 2019 (Malaysia)
- *I.* (*R.*) *majkusi* Kovařík & Šťáhlavský, 2019 (Malaysia)
- *I.* (*R.*) *rolciki* Kovařík & Šťáhlavský, 2019 (Vietnam, Cambodia)
- *I.* (*R.*) *schwotti* Kovařík & Šťáhlavský, 2019 (Thailand, Cambodia)
- *I.* (*R.*) *justi* Kovařík, Lowe & Šťáhlavský, 2020 (Laos)
- *I.* (*R.*) *alessandroi* **sp**. **n**. (Myanmar)

Isometrus (***Reddyanus***) ***alessandroi*** **sp**. **n**.

(Fig. 1-9)

ZooBank: https://zoobank.org/6F8F95B4-E65F-40EB-A650-FBE0EA362E8F

Holotype, ♂, Myanmar, Kayin State, Hpa-An, Saddan Cave, 250 m, 16.739735° - 097.718175°, about 90 m from cave entry, hidden in wall crevices, 31/VII/ 2015 (Giupponi A. & Kury A. leg.).

Depository. – Type material deposited in the Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Etymology. – Patronym honours our colleague Dr Alessandro P. L. Giupponi, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Fiocruz), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, prominent arachnologist and one of the collectors of the new species.

Diagnosis. – *Isometrus* species probably of moderate to small size considering that the holotype is a pre-adult, measuring 17.37 mm. General coloration yellowish to pale yellow with the presence of several more or less diffuse dark spots. Carinae and granulations moderately to weakly marked. Carapace moderately emarginate, with a weakly shaped angle. Pectines moderately long; pectinal tooth count 14-15 in male. Pedipalp chela fingers short; dentate margins of fixed and movable fingers with 6-7 almost linear rows of granules. Internal face of pedipalp patella with 4-5 moderate spinoid granules. Telson moderately to weakly elongated, weakly globular; subaculear tubercle strongly developed and rhomboid, dorsally with one granule on each side.

Description based on male holotype (morphometric measurements after the description)

Coloration. – Generally yellowish to pale yellow. Prosoma: Carapace yellowish with two longitudinal spots laterally and one median strip running from the median eyes to the posterior margin; presence of a dark inverted triangle running from lateral to median eyes; eyes almost blackish. Mesosoma: Tergites yellow with three longitudinal brownish stripes that continue the

Fig. **1-2**. *Isometrus* (*Reddyanus*) *alessandroi* **sp**. **n**., male holotype, habitus.

1. Dorsal aspect. **2**. Ventral aspect.

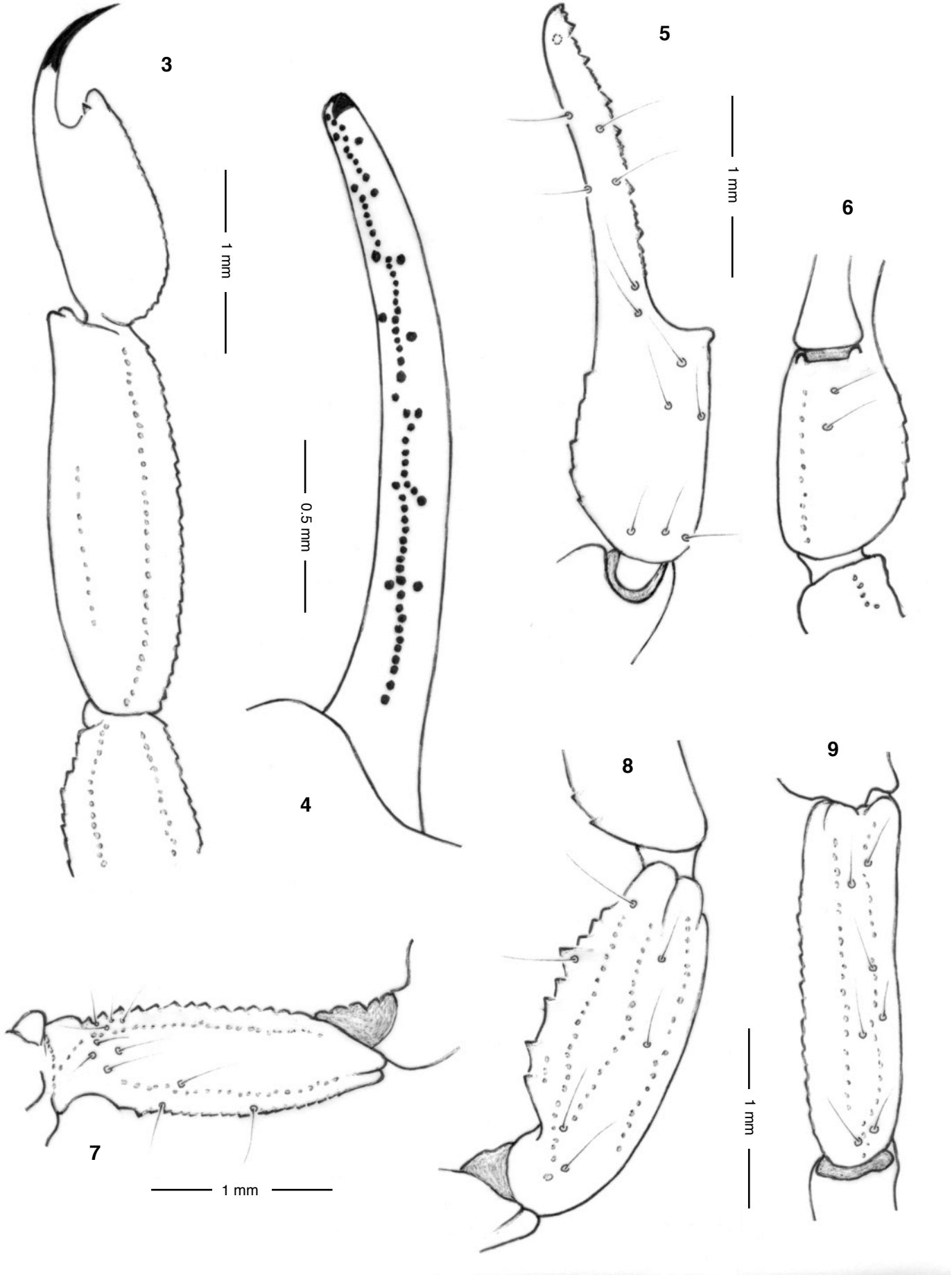

Fig. **3**-**9**. *Isometrus* (*Reddyanus*) *alessandroi* **sp**. **n**., male holotype.

3. Metasomal segment V and telson, lateral aspect. **4**. Cutting edge of chela movable finger. **5**-**9**. Trichobothrial pattern. **5**-**6**. Chela, dorso-external and ventral aspects. **7**. Femur, dorsal aspect. **8**-**9**. Patella, dorsal and external aspects.

median and lateral stripes of the carapace. Metasomal segments yellowish, with some diffuse, brownish spots on segment I-IV; spots better marked on V. Vesicle yellow; aculeus yellowish at base and reddish at tip. Venter yellow all over; pectines paler. Chelicerae yellow with reddish-brown variegated spots; fingers yellow, strongly infuscate, teeth reddish-yellow. Pedipalps yellow, with infuscations on femur, patella and chela; chela fingers reddish-brown; rows of granules on dentate margins of fingers dark reddish. Legs yellow to pale yellow with brownish spots.

Morphology. – Prosoma: anterior margin of carapace moderately emarginate, with a weakly shaped angle. Carapace carinae weakly marked; anterior median and posterior median carinae weakly developed; central lateral carinae inconspicuous. Intercarinal spaces weakly to moderately granular. Median ocular tubercle anterior to the centre of the carapace; median eyes separated by approximately one ocular diameter. Three pairs of lateral eyes. Mesosomal tergites I-VI with a median carina; weak on I, weak to moderate on II-VI. Tergite VII pentacarinate, with lateral pairs of carinae moderate; median carinae present in proximal half, moderately developed. Intercarinal spaces moderately to weakly granular. Sternites III to VI smooth; VII with four weakly marked carinae. Spiracles markedly short. Pectines moderately long; pectinal teeth count 14-15 in male holotype. Metasomal segment I with 10 carinae, crenulate; II to IV with 8 carinae, crenulate; segment V with five carinae; presence of one weak posterior spinoid granule on dorsal carinae of segments II-III. Dorsal furrows of all segments weakly developed, smooth; intercarinal spaces very weakly granular to smooth. Telson moderately to weakly elongated and weakly globular; one vestigial ventral carina; subaculear tubercle strongly marked and rhomboid, dorsally with one granule on each side. Chelicerae with dentition characteristic of buthids (Vachon, 1963); two reduced basal teeth on movable finger. Pedipalps: Femur pentacarinate; all carinae crenulate. Patella with seven carinae, crenulate; dorsointernal carinae with 4-5 weak spinoid granules. Chela weakly crenulated; internal face with a few spinoid granules. Intercarinal spaces moderately to weakly granular. Dentate margins on fixed and movable fingers composed of 6-7 almost linear rows of granules. Trichobothrial pattern type A, orthobothriotaxic (Vachon, 1974); dorsal trichobothria of femur in β (beta) configuration (Vachon, 1975). Legs: ventral aspect of tarsi with a brush-like group of setae. Tibial spurs absent; pedal spurs present and moderately developed on all legs.

Morphometric measurements (mm) of the male holotype.

– ***Total length*** 17.37.

– ***Carapace***
length 2.27.
anterior width 1.47.
posterior width 2.14.

– ***Mesosoma*** length 4.47.

– ***Metasomal segments***
I: length 1.27; width 1.07.
II: length 1.54; width 0.94.
III: length 1.74; width 0.87.
IV: length, 1.87; width 0.81.
V: length 2.27; width 0.81; depth 0.81.

– ***Telson*** length 1.94.

– ***Telson*** width 0.74; depth 0.81.

– ***Pedipalp***
femur length 1.87; width 0.67.
patella length 2.21; width 0.87.
chela length 3.41; width 0.81; depth 0.74.
movable finger length 2.14.

Relationships. – In account of its small size, general morphology and pale coloration pattern, *Isometrus* (*Reddyanus*) *alessandroi* **sp**. **n**. shows a certain morphological convergence

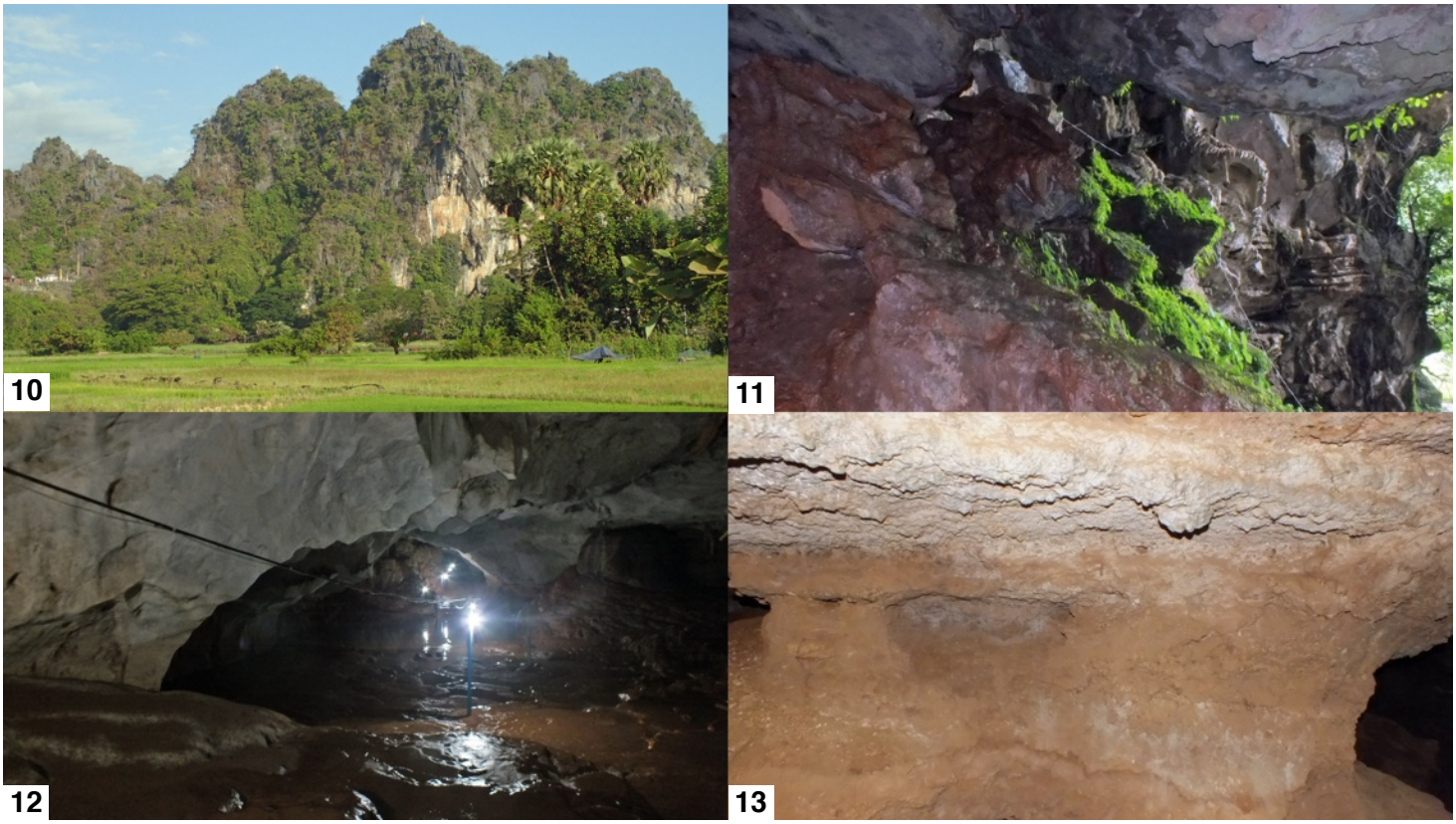

Fig. **10-13**. Habitat of *Isometrus* (*Reddyanus*) *alessandroi* **sp**. **n**. **10**. Region near Hpa-An, Kayin State, Myanmar, showing the karstic formation where the Saddan Cave is located (photo: F. Bréhier). **11**. Entry of the Saddan Cave seen from the interior (photo: A. Kury). **12**. Interior view of the Saddan Cave (photo: A. Kury). **13**. Interior view of the Saddan Cave, showing the limestone walls with crevices where the new species was found (photo: A. Kury).

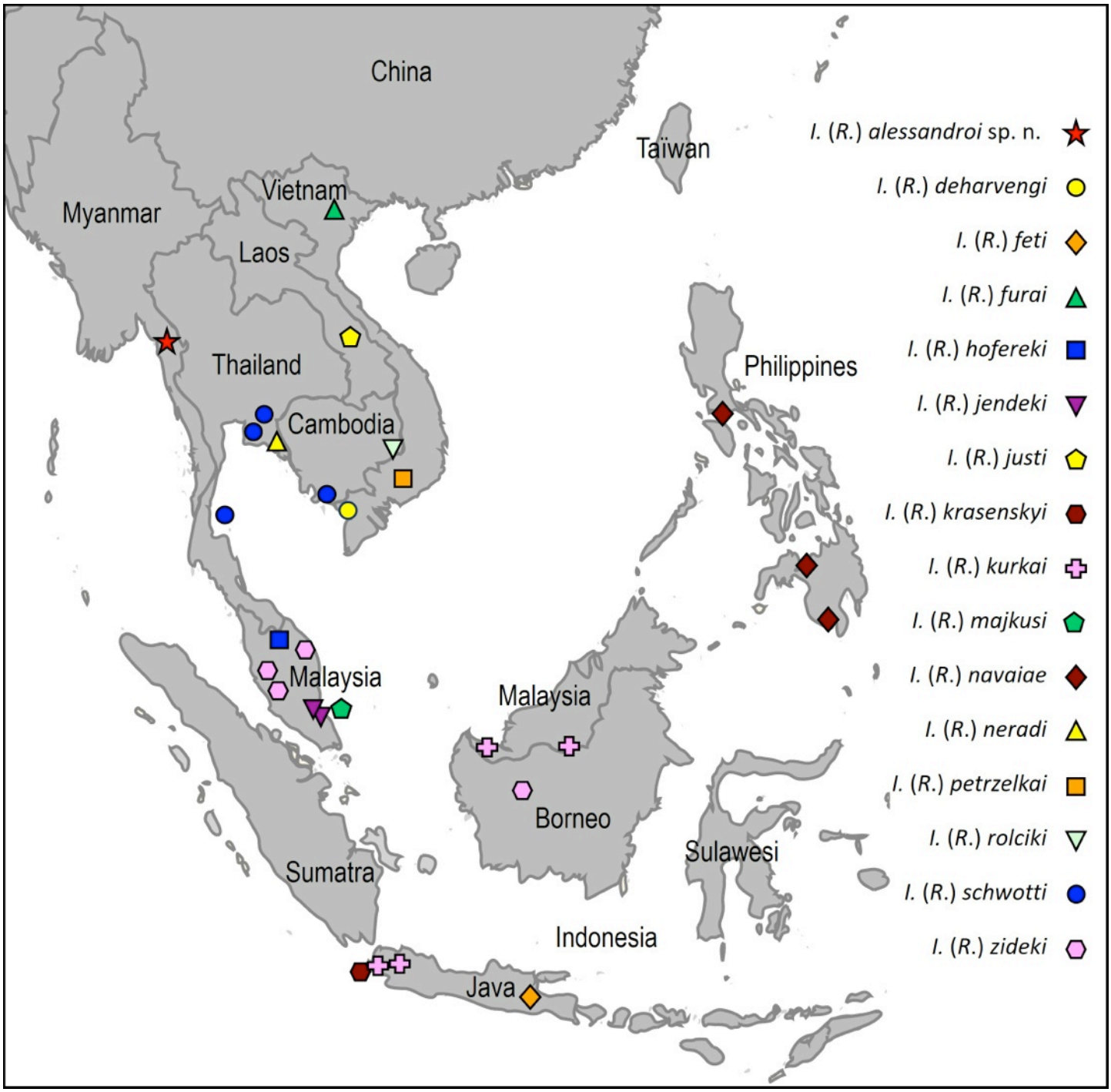

Fig. **14**. Map of Southeast Asia, showing the approximate distribution of the *Isometrus* (*Reddyanus*) species known from this region.

in relation with *I.* (*R.*) *schwotti*, described from Thailand (and Cambodia).

The new species can, however, be distinguished from this species by a number of features:

(i) a smaller size (considering the holotype is a pre-adult);

(ii) a slightly paler general coloration with dark spots less marked (more diffuse) on carapace and mesosoma;

(iii) different coloration pattern of pedipalp femur and patella;

(iv) telson less elongated and slightly globular, with only one granule on each side of subaculear tubercle, dorsally.

The most important argument however, supporting the description of the new species, is based on its geographical distribution and particularity of its cave environment.

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Publisher correspondence. – EY
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Description. – WL, EY
Article proofreading. – WL, EY
Bibliographic work. – WL, EY
Material study. – WL, EY
Author of the figures. – WL, EY (except Fig. 10-13 and cover, see Credits)

[1] **WL** = Lourenço W. R. – **EY** = Ythier E.

Résumé

Lourenço W. R. & Ythier E., 2025. – Une nouvelle espèce cavernicole d'*Isometrus* Ehrenberg 1828 du Myanmar (Scorpiones: Buthidae). *Faunitaxys*, 13(04): 1 – 6.

Une nouvelle espèce appartenant au genre *Isometrus* Ehrenberg 1828, sous-genre *Reddyanus* Vachon, 1972, est décrite du Myanmar: *Isometrus* (*Reddyanus*) *alessandroi* **sp**. **n**., collecté dans la grotte de Saddan, dans l'état Karen, à l'est du pays. Ces dernières années le nombre de nouvelles espèces décrites dans les sous-genres *Isometrus* et *Reddyanus* a augmenté significativement. Néanmoins, aucune de ces descriptions n'a concerné le Myanmar. Cette situation géographique particulière ainsi que la combinaison de différents critères morphologiques nous amènent à proposer une nouvelle espèce.

Mots-clés. – Scorpion, Buthidae, *Isometrus*, *Reddyanus*, *alessandroi*, taxinomie, nouvelle espèce, description, grotte, forêt tropicale, Myanmar.

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Illustration de la couverture :

Outside relief and vegetation in the region of Saddan cave (photo: A. Kury).

Crédits:

Wilson R. Lourenço & **E. Ythier** : Fig. 1-9 & 14.

F. Bréhier: Fig. 10.

A. Kury: Fig. 11-13 & couverture.

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